

SEPTEMBER LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM PROMOTION

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September is when election campaigns get into full swing: it's a great time to call your local candidates' offices and offer to host a "Meet The Candidates" Night event that would be open to the public, as well as your members. It affords everyone a chance to share their stories with their legislators, express support for legislative actions that benefit veterans, active military and their families. It promotes local community engagement and education in the legislative process.

Does talking with your Congressional Representative sound intimidating? The Auxiliary has training available to help – I have attached the Auxiliary's ***"A Guide to Contacting Your Legislators"*** which provides detailed information and guidelines, beyond the basics of "be courteous, brief and know the talking points" instructions

I talked to Rep. Maxine Waters, D-43, about what she wants (and needs) to hear from us, and she gave me 3 key elements we need to cover when speaking with her:

- Tell your story
- Identify the problem
- Tell what is missing (that would solve the problem)

Her office also provided the dates of when Congress is NOT in session through year-end, and Representatives are likely to be in their home districts:

- September 3 – 12 and 18-21
- October 2 – 31
- November 1 – 8, 13 - 16 and 22 – 29
- December 4 – 7 and 18 – 31.

The dates are also posted at www.majorityleader.gov: select "Schedule" from the menu.

- ❖ Ongoing Social Media Campaign: get legislators to remove Section 108 from the "Take Care of America's Veterans Act" (TCAVA): all members are encouraged to respond to the **Action Alert** and to make posts on social media to publicize the fatal flaw in the TCAVA legislation that would allow Congress to *take money away from VA disability compensation to pay for other veterans' benefits*. New graphics and notes are included in the 'TCAVA Toolkit' which is attached to this email. Current and future veterans will be negatively impacted not only by this specific legislation if passed, but it will also set a dangerous 'defunding' precedent that could cause harm to veterans in other ways down the road. The 'Toolkit' is accompanied by four graphics your members can use now to put on their own social media platforms. Please discuss these at your next meeting.

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- Project Idea: This is an election year, so every Auxiliary should be able to do at least one report on legislative matters, such as hosting a Candidate Forum, reporting the number of members who served as poll workers, the number of members who participated in voter registration drives, members transporting folks to the polls to vote, as well as how many members voted.
- Project Idea: If your Scholarships Chairman and Legislative Chairman team up together, you can help high school students pursue the Voice of Democracy scholarship while educating them about the legislative process. This is a perfect time for students to learn how bills become law. Teaching them about how laws and federal appropriations can impact veterans, active service members and their families dovetails nicely with this year's theme: **"What A Veteran Taught Me About America."** Make sure you have lots of scholarship applications on hand, as well as copies of the **"VFW Auxiliary Guide to the Legislative Process."** You can find it under **"Resources"** on the Legislative Program page on our Department Website: <https://vfwcaaux.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=120357>. Please report the event under both programs (but include hours/miles/members under only one of the reports to avoid "double-dipping.")
- Project Idea: Celebrate our right to vote by distributing **"I Vote In Honor Of A United States Veteran"** stickers to your members – there are two eye-catching designs available under the **"Resources"** sub header on the Legislative Program page on our Department Website. They print up well on Avery 5163-equivalent label sheets:



As always, please don't hesitate to call or drop me a line if you have any questions or comments. I want to be notified if you set up "Candidate Forums" or other "meet your legislator" events.

Enjoy!

Maddie

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Legislative Program Goals:

Be An Advocate

Be Informed

Be Engaged